

**Alan H. Woo**

**OC Black Chamber Community Development Chair**

**Black History Month: Future Leaders Luncheon**

The OC Black Chamber held a very successful Black History Month Future Leadership luncheon that connected youth with leaders and their common history. We went a step further by connecting students of all cultures to community leaders, corporations, and educational leaders offering networking, internship opportunities and other career alternatives.

African Americans' unique, monumental contributions touch every realm of human endeavor and achievement.

At the Black Chamber, we reflect on our work over the past years and look to elevate a key question: How do we emphasize undisputed Black achievement in a nation that still reveals stubborn racial inequities without singing the blues?

We provide access to information.

We highlight and spotlight Black researchers who bring their trenchant analyses, perspectives, and voices to the complex African American experience and the challenges facing our nation as a whole.

I believe the Urban Institute provides the best efforts to bring unbiased, authoritative analysis and insights at a time when need it.

At the luncheon, a new Black Chamber member asked why I am passionately working in the Black Community instead of working in the Asian American community. I said I may not be Black by birth but it is my community too. The Black Chamber of OC has always been inclusive and multicultural.

Bobby McDonald made it so. He has provided mentorship, leadership opportunities, inclusiveness and above all friendship.

More importantly, I also realized that this new member did not know the history of the contributions of African Americans in Orange County and why it is important to all cultures.

Without their organizations and leadership, we would not enjoy civil rights, fair housing, access to jobs and education.

And we have worked together, as marginalized groups, who don't wallow in disparities, because we are too busy working to advance our communities. I do work in the Asian and Pacific Islander American community. I do work in the Latino community. I work with groups that empowers youth, improves neighborhoods, create jobs and works for affordable and positive reinvestments in the underserved low income communities, advance civil rights and promote the arts.

Kudos to the Black Chamber. Thanks for connecting us with many resources and pertinent information. throughout the years and creating opportunities. This Futures Leaders Luncheon was a superb example of the resources and information provided to our county.